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To: ["R7 Senior" <Staff>](#)  
CC:  
Date: 6/18/2013 6:43:50 AM  
Subject: St. Louis Post-Dispatch - Expert says Bridgeton Landfill fire is contained away from radioactive waste

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## Expert says Bridgeton Landfill fire is contained away from radioactive waste

St. Louis Post-Dispatch - 8 hours ago • By JEFFREY TOMICH

[http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/expert-says-bridgeton-landfill-fire-is-contained-away-from-radioactive/article\\_45b9c840-3239-5749-abe8-62a4d5d16eee.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/expert-says-bridgeton-landfill-fire-is-contained-away-from-radioactive/article_45b9c840-3239-5749-abe8-62a4d5d16eee.html)

A landfill fire expert hired by Missouri said he believes the subsurface fire at Bridgeton Landfill is contained to the southern half of the site and isn't moving north toward the adjacent West Lake Landfill, where Cold War era radioactive waste is deposited.

Todd Thallhamer, an engineer who has worked with the state for more than a year to evaluate the scope of the fire, estimates the smoldering mass of waste hasn't advanced beyond two lines of gas wells constructed by the landfill's owner, Republic Services Inc., this year to stop the fire's advance.

"The gas interceptor well system appears to be holding," Thallhamer told a crowd of about 250 people crammed into Pattonville High School cafeteria for an update on the landfill fire.

At the same time, Thallhamer cautioned that there's not enough data to provide assurances that the system will continue to hold. He also recommended construction of a vertical barrier between the northern and southern halves of the landfill to keep the smoldering from moving further north.

The meeting was organized by state Rep. Bill Otto, D-St. Charles, and included a 45-minute Internet briefing by representatives of the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health and Human Services and Thallhamer, one of two technical consultants hired by the DNR to evaluate the scope of the landfill fire.

Waste buried within the 52-acre Bridgeton Landfill has been smoldering since December 2010, with some recorded temperatures exceeding 300 degrees. The heat and subsidence of the landfill surface intensified last year, along with odors that prompted a surge of complaints from people who live and work nearby.

Jonathan Garoutte, chief of bureau of environmental epidemiology for the Health Department, said odors from landfill gas emissions can produce short-term health effects, especially for children, senior citizens and people with respiratory problems can suffer more severe reactions.

But, he said local hospital data show no statistically significant increase in emergency room visits related to odors and air quality.

"We definitely understand that the odors are concerning and that the community is having a reduced quality of life," Garoutte said. "But there has not been observed chemicals at levels of public health concern for acute exposure."

The meeting didn't address long-term plans for radioactive waste at the adjacent West Lake Landfill, a federal Superfund site.

Otto, however, joined the chorus of local residents and environmental activists who are calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to remove radioactive material at West Lake. He said inconsistencies in federal documents going back to the mid-1970s — and in one case a misplaced decimal point — raise questions about what's actually buried at West Lake.

The EPA will hold a public meeting on June 25 to discuss results of an aerial radiological survey of the site and surrounding area conducted earlier this year.